HALF-LIFE™

HINT BOOK

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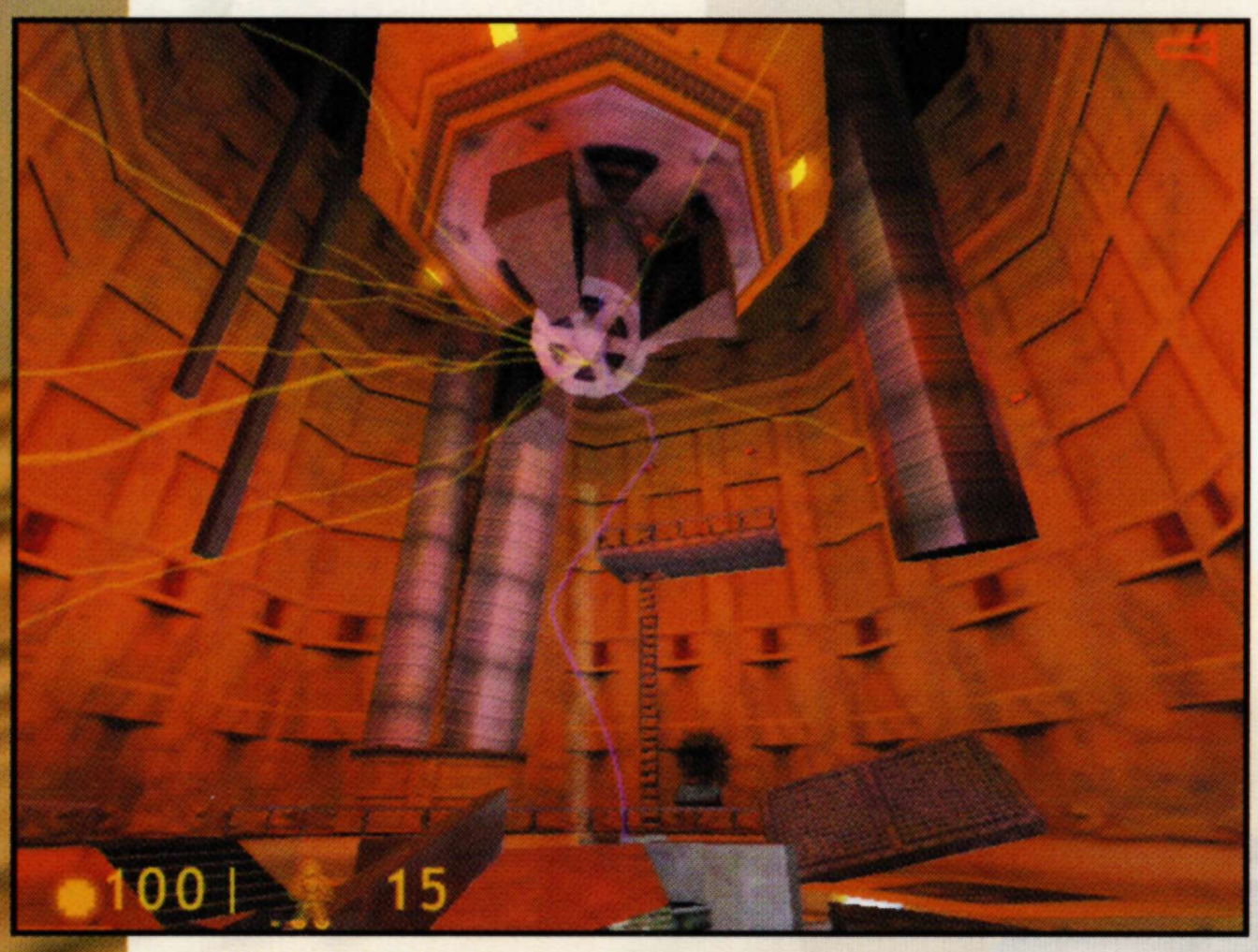
HALF-LIFE

OFFICIAL HINT BOOK

Deep in the bowels of the Black Mesa Federal Research Facility, a decommissioned missile base, a top-secret project is underway. Scientists have opened a Portal into another dimension, and human science has never seen anything like the creatures coming through it.

You're a research associate with limited government clearance and no real idea of the immensity and dangers of the experiment. It is your job to keep power levels constant as the Portal between worlds widens bit by bit.

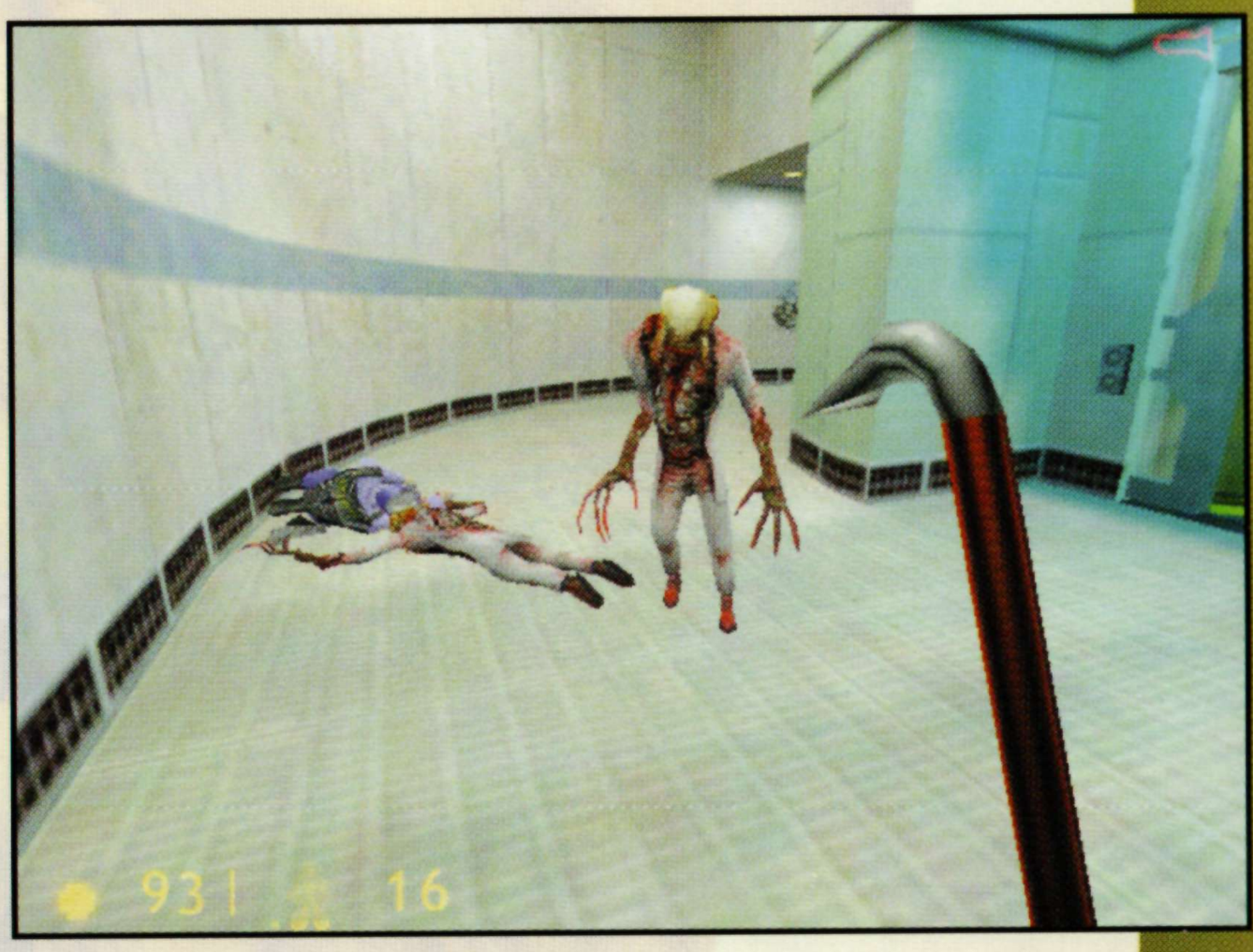
Then something goes wrong. Sabotage—a power surge you can't control—an explosion of unearthly light—a glimpse of space-time shattering in the Black Mesa Facility. The next thing you know, the lab is a disaster area. Sirens wail and scientists flee in terror.



Hordes of creatures from the Portal Dimension are pouring through rips in the local fabric of space-time. Monsters are everywhere, and madness rules. You head for the surface, but the usual routes are impassable—

damaged, or infested with Headcrabs and Hound Eyes and increasingly larger and hungrier creatures.

You must enlist the help of traumatized scientists and trigger-happy security guards to get through high-security zones, sneaking and fighting your way through ruined missile silos and Cold War cafeterias, through darkened air ducts and subterranean railways.



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When you near the surface at last, you learn other-dimensional creatures aren't your only enemies: Government forces have arrived, with squadrons of ruthless containment troops and stealthy assassins. Their orders seem to be to ensure that nothing gets out alive—not even you.

A tactical nuclear strike cuts off your escape. Even your own species has turned against you. Maybe you'll be glad to see another Portal beckoning…Then again, maybe not. On the far side of the Portal, the laws of reality are twisted, and nothing is familiar except the sense of danger. Suddenly, saving Earth becomes secondary to saving your own skin.

WEAPONS

When the gateway to the alien world first opens, you're unarmed. That has to change—and quickly—or your escape attempt will never get off the ground. Here's a look at the weapons you'll collect in the early going.

CROWBAR

The Crowbar is the first weapon you collect, and it's the only weapon that doesn't require ammunition. It's actually quite potent as a hand-to-hand weapon, but obviously you can't use it against medium- to long-range targets.

You'll use the Crowbar chiefly in the following situations:

TO DAMAGE OR DESTROY OBJECTS.

Never waste valuable ammo destroying crates, barrels, or other breakable objects—at least, not if you don't have to. The Crowbar is the weapon of choice against inanimate objects. Of course, some objects aren't close enough to bash with the Crowbar, and other objects are too dangerous to stand near (explosive barrels come to mind). You must use more conventional weapons to destroy these objects.

TO KILL NUISANCE ENEMIES.

You can dispatch some enemies, such as lone Zombies, with a series of swift Crowbar blows. To waste ammunition on such enemies would be foolish.

IN EXTREMELY TIGHT QUARTERS.

The Crowbar often is the best weapon to keep handy as you crawl through ventilation ducts and other close environments; any enemy you encounter is likely to be at close range, and thus will be a prime candidate for a Crowbar to the head.

WHENEVER AMMO IS LIMITED.

If you really can't afford to waste ammunition, you must seek combat where you can make do with the Crowbar.

You *don't* want to use the Crowbar against enemies that present a real threat. Engage truly dangerous foes at medium to long range with potent weapons. Getting close enough to use the Crowbar on these types is usually a bad idea.

PISTOL

Soon after collecting the Crowbar, you'll locate a Pistol. The Pistol isn't a potent weapon, but it's ideal for picking off small enemies from a distance, when they'll have a hard time counterattacking.

Use your Pistol against Zombies, Barnacles, Headcrabs, and lone Hound Eyes. All either possess no long-range attacks, or possess long-range attacks that are fairly easy to dodge. With these sorts of foes, you can simply hang back and dodge, occasionally firing off a few Pistol rounds, until you're victorious.

The Pistol is one of the more accurate long-range weapons you have. Thus, it's great for extremely long-range duels where power isn't a concern.

Conversely, the Pistol lacks close-range power, and it isn't much good at destroying inanimate objects. For a more effective close-range attack, use the Shotgun.

SHOTGUN

The Shotgun fires a tight cluster of lead pellets that gradually scatters at long range. The weapon is most effective at medium to close range, where all the pellets are likely to hit their mark.

Because the Shotgun fires in discrete, powerful

bursts, it lends itself to hit-and-run tactics—that is, when you leap out from behind an obstacle, fire a shell at the enemy, and then duck for cover.

Another trick is to let the enemy see you and then sink back behind an obstacle. Let your foes come to you. When they round the corner, let 'em have it.

Use the Shotgun when you're likely to face close-range foes. Put it away when you're likely to engage in long-range duels.

The Shotgun's ammunition is always a concern. Because you must load each shell into the chamber separately, reloading is relatively time-consuming. It's a good idea to manually press the Reload key during quiet moments, so you'll always have a full complement of ammunition when the lead starts flying.

GRENADES

Grenades are extremely potent—and easy to misuse. Miscalculate even slightly and your Grenades can bounce right back into your own lap instead of falling at the enemy's feet. Grenades blow up after a brief delay, during which they tend to roll around.

Practice throwing Grenades from different angles and watch how they roll. Getting them to where you want them is a fine art.

The Grenade's greatest weakness—its slow and indirect delivery—is also its greatest asset. You can lob Grenades over low walls and bounce them around corners—an excellent way to clear out laser trip mines.

Don't try to use Grenades in normal combat situations. A tough enemy with a direct, straight-shooting attack can capitalize on the delay. Instead, use Grenades for sneak attacks on enemies unaware of your presence, or lob them over obstacles to clear out threats you don't want to fire at.

ALIEN PROFILES

Your journey through the ruins of Black Mesa (and beyond) will acquaint you with a vast array of alien life forms—almost all deadly. The following descriptions will acquaint you with a few of these creatures.

HEADCRAB

Headcrabs are the first enemies you'll encounter in *Half-Life*. These tiny, scuttling creatures look humble, but don't ignore them: Their goal is to latch onto your head and penetrate your brain, turning you into a mindless Zombie. As you wander through the ruins of the Anomalous Materials Lab you'll see many examples of their handiwork.

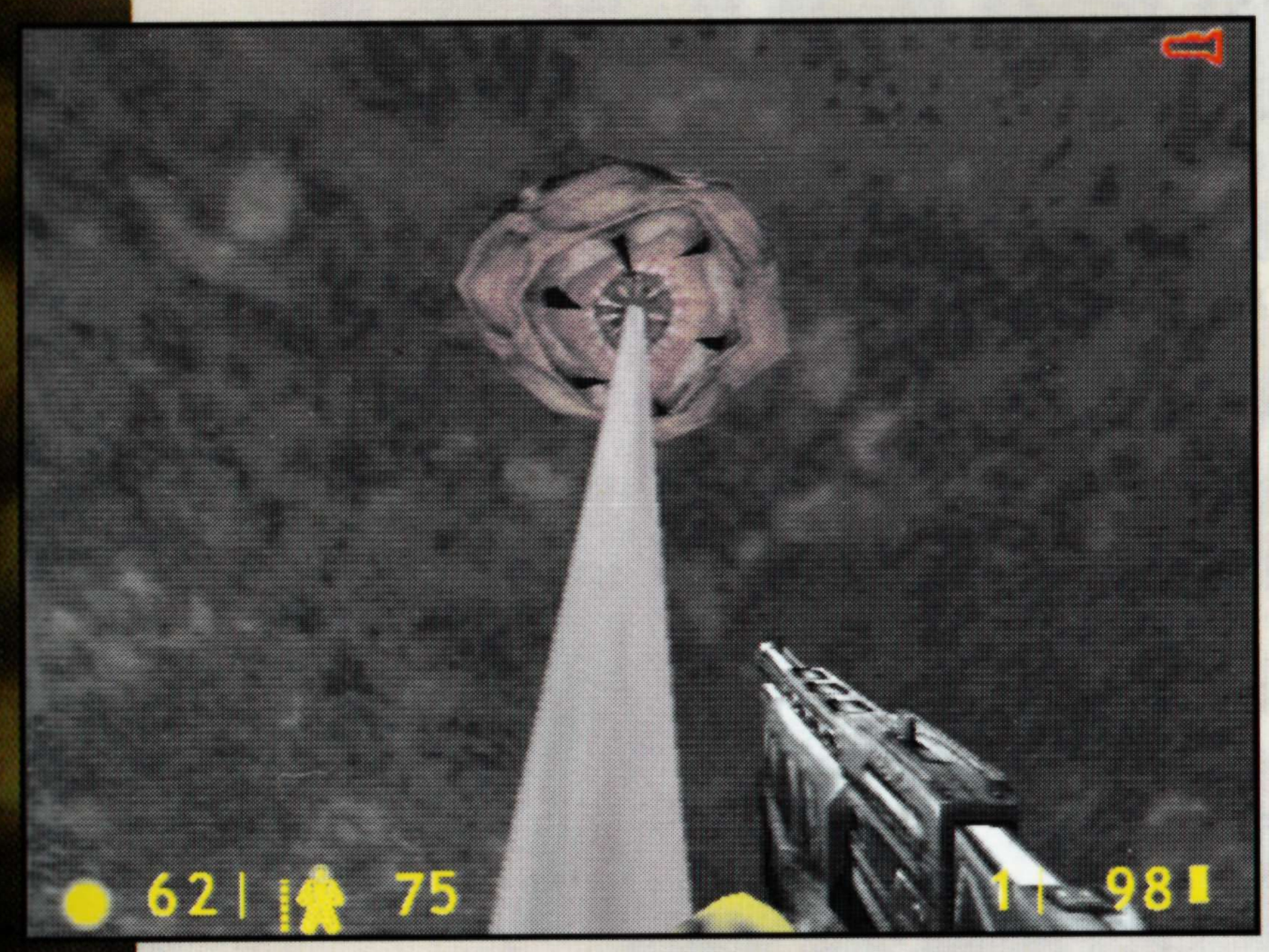
Headcrabs aren't a major threat to an armed and vigilant scientist, but due to their small size, you can fail to notice them

before they strike. Take care not to let Headcrabs wear you down for your encounters with other enemies.

Headcrabs possess no long-range attack, but can leap at your face from short to medium range. Thus, you want to dispatch them from afar, where they don't get a chance to strike back.

The Pistol is the ideal way to kill Headcrabs. It's accurate, requires only a few shots, and can destroy Headcrabs from ranges at which they can't retaliate. Using anything more powerful than a Pistol to kill Headcrabs is typically overkill and a waste of ammunition.

In enclosed spaces, such as ventilation ducts, the Crowbar also can be an effective weapon against the Headcrab.



BARNACLE

The Barnacle is a silent, deadly creature that attaches itself to the ceiling and waits. When a human-sized (or smaller) victim passes beneath it, the Barnacle snatches it with its long tongue and drags it up to its waiting claws.

Barnacles typically hang in clusters or colonies; if you see one, you can bet there are more nearby. They're sometimes easy to miss, especially where the ceiling is so high they're far above eye level.

The best defense against Barnacles is to thoroughly scan new areas as you enter them, paying close

attention to the ceiling. The Barnacles themselves might be largely invisible, but their long tongues usually give them away.

When you've spotted Barnacles, stand back and dispatch them with multiple Pistol shots. As long as you aren't standing directly beneath them, they can't counterattack. Methodically clear all Barnacles from the area, even if they seem to be in out-of-the-way places. You don't want to forget about them and run under them later!

If you do manage to wander under a Barnacle, it will snatch you and drag you skyward. When this happens, the best policy is immediately to look straight up and discharge your weapon rapidly. Kill the Barnacle before it can drag you all the way up, and it will drop you to the floor; you won't sustain much damage. If you're slow, however, you'll be damaged not only by the Barnacle's sharp claws, but from the long, dangerous fall.

ZOMBIE

The Zombie, created when a Headcrab latches onto a living human head, is a fearsome sight at first, a shambling monster out of a nightmare. After you confront them a few times, however, the nightmarish quality wears off. True, the Zombie can inflict serious damage with its long, razor-sharp claws, but it possesses no long-range attack—and its slow foot speed means it can't catch up to you if you make it a point to backtrack as you fight.

Any long-range weapon can take out the Zombie; even the lowly Crowbar can make quick work of it. If you choose the Crowbar, you'll have great success if you charge in, swing the Crowbar a few times, and then dash back and wait for the Zombie to swipe both arms at you. Then charge in again for another swift

attack. If you're good, you won't take any return damage.

You have little to fear from a Zombie if you fight it in open spaces. In enclosed areas, however, the Zombie requires a bit more attention. If you're caught in a tight spot with a Zombie, consider fleeing back to familiar territory and confronting it in a more spacious area. There's no reason not to pick and choose your fights.

HOUND EYE

Hound Eyes are three-legged alien pack animals that sport a huge, sonic "eye" for navigation and attack. Hound Eyes aren't terribly fast, but they possess a number of attributes that make them tough—especially in packs.

The Hound Eye's attack is a sonic blast. You can tell when this blast is coming because it "charges up" for a second or two before the damaging sonic wave lets loose. It's best to confront Hound Eyes near a corner or large obstacle, or in a large, open area, where you can either hide briefly to avoid the sonic blast or run back to a safer distance.

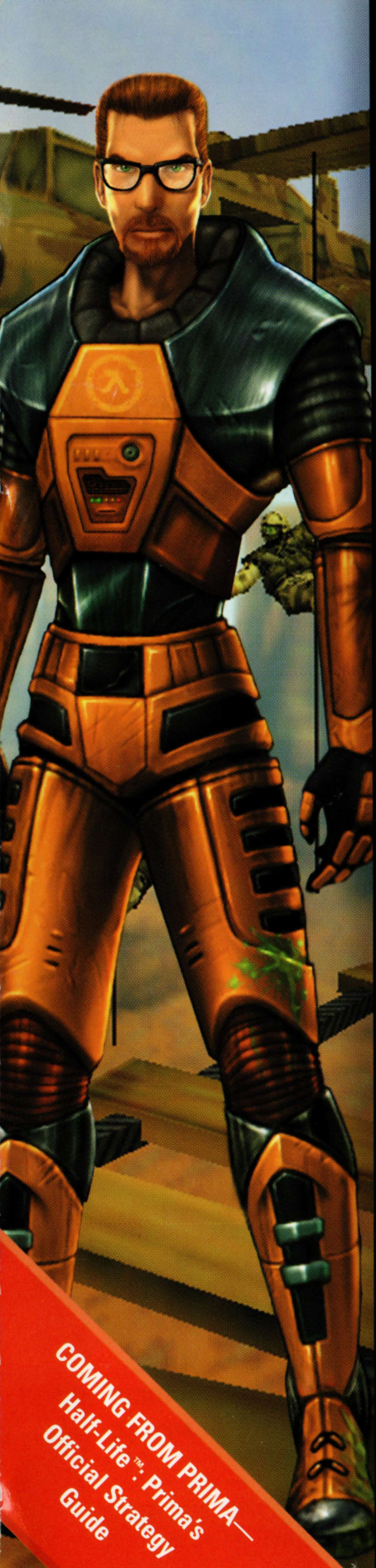
Hound Eyes are pack animals, and it's in packs that they're most dangerous. The packs tend to attack simultaneously, flanking their target from several directions, if possible, to prevent its escape.

Hound Eyes' sonic attacks intensify with each additional Hound Eye. Thus, they gain strength in numbers, where their attacks acquire greater resonance and power. This makes packs of Hound Eyes deceptively tough, especially if you're used to encountering them one-on-one.

A good policy to employ with Hound Eyes is to retreat continually as you fight, firing all the while. Force them to approach you from great distances, where an automatic weapon

can shred them. Or fight from around a corner, where you can dispatch them with a Shotgun blast as they approach.

Regardless of the tactics you choose, remember that fighting Hound Eyes is easiest when you employ hit-and-run tactics; hit 'em hard, and then run and hide while their sonic attack discharges. Standing your ground to slug it out with Hound Eyes is never a good idea.



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INSIDE YOU'LL FIND:

- Weapons list
- Alien profiles

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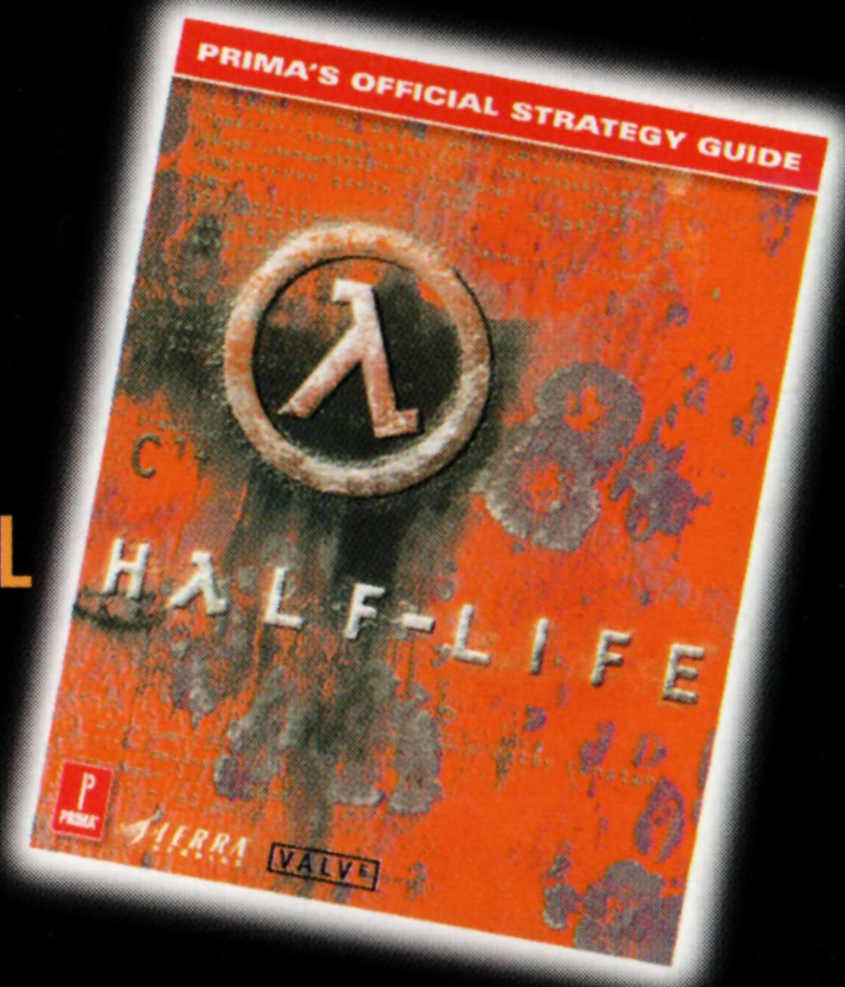
HALF-LIFE™:
PRIMA'S OFFICIAL
STRATEGY GUIDE



- Detailed walkthroughs for every level
- Location of all items and weapons
- Tips for Internet play

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Half-Life™: Prima's
Official Strategy
Guide

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Platform: PC